

# The Master Plan for The Villages of North Columbia

Prepared for  
The City of Columbia, South Carolina



FA Johnson Consulting Group, Inc.  
in association with Jordan, Jones & Goulding, Inc.

December 1, 2005

## **The City of Columbia South Carolina**

**Honorable Robert D. Coble, Mayor**

### **City Council**

**Sam Davis - District One**

**E. W. Cromartie, II - District Two**

**Anne M. Sinclair - District Three**

**Hamilton Osborne Jr. - District Four**

**Tameika Isaac Devine- At Large**

**Daniel J. Rickenmann - At Large**

**Charles P. Austin, Sr. City Manager**

## **Coordinating Committee**

**Bill Norwood**

**Fred Monk - Co-Chair**

**Ellen H. Cooper**

**Hampton Oliver**

**Angelo Tsiantis**

**Melvin Outen**

**Keith McIver**

**Virginia Ricker**

**Fred Reisz**

**Henry T. Hopkins**

**Sampson Pringle**

**Alvin Hinkle**

**Phyllis Coleman - Co-Chair**

**Wiley Cooper**

**Maire Dugan**

**Henry Bracey**

**Yolanda N. Jones-Bell**

**Marcia Beazley**

**Wanda Nunn**

**Gwendolyn Hughes**

**Dr. Caroline Whitson**

**Acknowledgements**



## City Staff

Dana Turner	Assistant City Manager
Leisha Utsey	Public Relations
Patrick Rathbun	Public Relations
Milton Smalls	Empowerment Zone Director
Chip Land	Planning Director
Skip Hudson	Planning
Patrick Rathbun	Public Relations
Mark Mylott	Development Services Director
Johnathan Chambers	Development Services
Jeff Rainwater	Parks and Recreation Department
Jim Lawracy	Parks and Recreation Department
Bradley Anderson	Fire Chief
Aubrey Jenkins	Deputy Fire Chief
Frank Cruz	Fire Department
Rick Smallwood	Community Development
Rick Semon	Community Development
Valerie Jackson	Community Development
Captain Isa Greene	Police Department
Shaheed Khan	Engineering
Mike Manis	Eau Claire Development Corporation
Nelly Clay	Eau Claire Development Corporation
Susan Britt	Richland County Planning Department

## Development Team

Fred A. Johnson II	FA Johnson Consulting Group, Inc.
F.A. Johnson	FA Johnson Consulting Group, Inc.
Rana Peri Davis	FA Johnson Consulting Group, Inc.
Zachary Mitchell	FA Johnson Consulting Group, Inc.
Geoffrey Boyd	Jordan, Jones & Goulding
Chip Cannon	Jordan, Jones & Goulding
Jon M. Davis	Jordan, Jones & Goulding
Fred Hanna	Jordan, Jones & Goulding
Tommy Hines	Jordan, Jones & Goulding
Brad Jones	Jordan, Jones & Goulding
Chakira Johnson	Jordan, Jones & Goulding
Kelli Kline	Kelli Kline & Associates

## For Additional Information

F.A. Johnson Consulting Group, Inc.  
 1520 Senate Street, Suite 177  
 Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
 (803)799-2057  
[www.fajohnsondevelopmentgroup.com](http://www.fajohnsondevelopmentgroup.com)

## Special Thanks

A special thanks to Dr. Carolne Whitson and the Columbia College family for hosting the neighborhood “Take-Part” Workshops and Coordinating Committee meetings.

November 22, 2005

The Honorable Robert D. Coble, Mayor  
And Members of Columbia City Council  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: North Columbia Master Plan Final Report

Dear Mayor Coble and Members of Columbia City Council:

**In the evolution of a neighborhood, or community there comes a point when the decisions of the past, the conditions of the present, and the prospects for the future converge and an approach to maintaining and enhancing the social, economic, and physical prosperity of that region must be addressed.** The **North Columbia** area **has reached this important crossroads** and has completed the process of assessing its resources and the role it will play within the larger framework of the Columbia metropolitan statistical area.

This Master Plan document is the result of a community coming together, rolling up its sleeves, and taking a close, tough look at the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities within and assisting in the formulation of goals and solutions for the future. Across North Columbia, there are many examples of once vibrant neighborhoods that have sustained themselves on the strength of grassroots efforts including the development and activity of twenty-five (25) local neighborhood associations.

For many years, the infrastructure of the City has deteriorated and the overall business and residential population has steadily decreased in these neighborhoods. Steps have been taken to reverse this trend. A number of private developers have begun to invest in quadrants of the North Columbia area. Streetscape improvements along North Main have been approved and are just one of the initiatives underway that seek to elevate the standard of living for all of North Columbia. The population base is beginning to grow again. Change is underway in this community, as it is in many areas of the city.

The Master Plan brings certainty to investors, developers, contractors, businesspeople and residents by providing a clear vision of the community's goals and a basis for the direction of future development. **It is a roadmap** for the development and refinement of the neighborhoods for the present and future needs of North Columbia. The master plan is the documentation of an approach to physical issues, which will help the neighborhoods achieve their goals. Because those goals can and will change over time, the master plan report should not be a proscriptive, limited document. Instead, planning and redevelopment should be undertaken with flexibility and adaptability in mind.

# Acknowledgements

It is a framework for decision-making that expresses a point of view regarding all aspects of North Columbia. The **Plan identifies catalyst sites for new construction, enhanced development, and possible expansion of existing efforts**. The master plan establishes **a vision for physical assets of the community**. In addition, the master planning process evaluates the current physical conditions of the community, identifying issues that need to be addressed and proposing options to address those issues.

This Master Plan for North Columbia was created in response to the public's vision for future growth. All of the Take-Part Workshops were interactive and engaged the citizen participants. Each meeting consisted of two parts: 1) Presentation – project background, issues and designs were described; 2) Workshop – attendees broke into small groups for table discussions, reported back to the larger audience and completed individual response sheets. Citizen participants were asked to respond to specific development alternatives. This work has been summarized in a separate volume entitled **“North Columbia Master Plan Workshop Findings” and dated July 29, 2005**.

In order to provide the proper foundation to this report, a detailed demographic and real estate market analysis was prepared as a part of this work program. Those findings have been summarized in a separate volume entitled **“Socio-Economic and Real Estate Market Analysis” dated October 1, 2005**.

The master plan is designed so that as the community changes, the general strategies documented in the report will remain valid regardless of how and when the particular projects called for in the plan are developed. Further, this Master Plan Process, from a technical standpoint, was directed by a Management/Development Firm, which yielded results that would facilitate the likelihood of easy implementation by identifying where the specific opportunities are located.

Sincerely,  
F.A. Johnson Consulting Group, Inc.

Fred A. Johnson, II, Esq.  
Managing Principal

cc: Charles P. Austin, Sr. City Manager  
Dana Turner, Assistant City Manager



# Table of Contents

<b>Section One - Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Section Two - Community Analysis</b>	<b>21</b>
Site Analysis	22
Transportation Corridors	29
Neighborhoods	41
Market Analysis	67
Public Involvement	72
<b>Section Three - Master Plan</b>	<b>79</b>
Artist Village	86
Activity Nodes	88
Transportation Corridors	91
Neighborhoods	93
College Village	96
Activity Nodes	98
Transportation Corridors	101
Neighborhoods	105
Redevelopment Areas	110
Gateway Village	114
Activity Nodes	116
Transportation Corridors	121
Neighborhoods	124
Redevelopment Areas	128
Design Guideline Recommendations	131
<b>Section Four - Catalysts</b>	<b>138</b>
First Tier Catalysts	141
Second Tier Catalysts	157
Third Tier Catalysts	170
<b>Section Five - Action Plan</b>	<b>177</b>



# Executive Summary







N. Main Street , “Gateway to North Columbia”



“Take-Part” Workshop Participants

## Overview

Located in Columbia South Carolina, the North Columbia project area is located in Richland County Council District One and is bounded between Interstate 20 to the north, the City’s Central Business District to the south, Farrow Road to the east and the Broad River Road to the west. **The area encompasses twenty five organized neighborhood associations on approximately +/-4200 acres.** Many neighborhoods within the area are benefiting from a national trend of young professionals and empty nesters tired of suburban living, returning to intown neighborhoods in search of the diversity and energy associated with downtowns. They are equally as interested in investing in inexpensive older homes or taking advantage of new infill housing within the area as well as reducing the amount of time they spend in commuter traffic. In addition, the Columbia College, Lutheran Seminary, South University and the existing parks within the community, provide a solid base as well as community open space. These are attractive amenities to new residents. Due to the size of the project area, neighborhoods were divided along geographical boundaries into four clusters.

The City of Columbia commissioned The North Columbia Master Plan in the spring of 2005. A citizen coordinating committee was instituted to oversee the development of the master plan. The committee was comprised of neighborhood leaders, business owners, academic institution representatives, elected officials and city staff that came together to identify issues and untapped opportunities within their community and develop strategies to combat these issues and promote quality redevelopment within the community.





[Location Map](#)



Church located in Seminary Ridge  
Neighborhood



Single-family home on  
Pineneedle Road

## Vision

From these committee meetings and subsequent “Take-Part Workshops”, five goals were identified for the North Columbia Master Plan:

*Community Goal: Reinvent the Image of North Columbia*

*Community Goal: Preservation of existing single-family neighborhoods*

*Community Goal: Develop supportive retail services*

*Community Goal: Maintain and develop new parks and community open spaces*

*Community Goal: Increase educational services and outreach programs*





Single-family home in the Northwood Hills neighborhood



Vacant home in the Belmont neighborhood

## Process

To develop the North Columbia Master Plan, a four step process was implemented. The steps included:

### *Community Analysis*

The community analysis included a review of the existing physical conditions within the project area, a market analysis that reviewed the current and future market trends within the project area and the City of Columbia, and “Take-Part Workshops” that included a visual preference survey and interactive planning sessions as well as a follow up community “Drop-In” work session.

### *Master Plan*

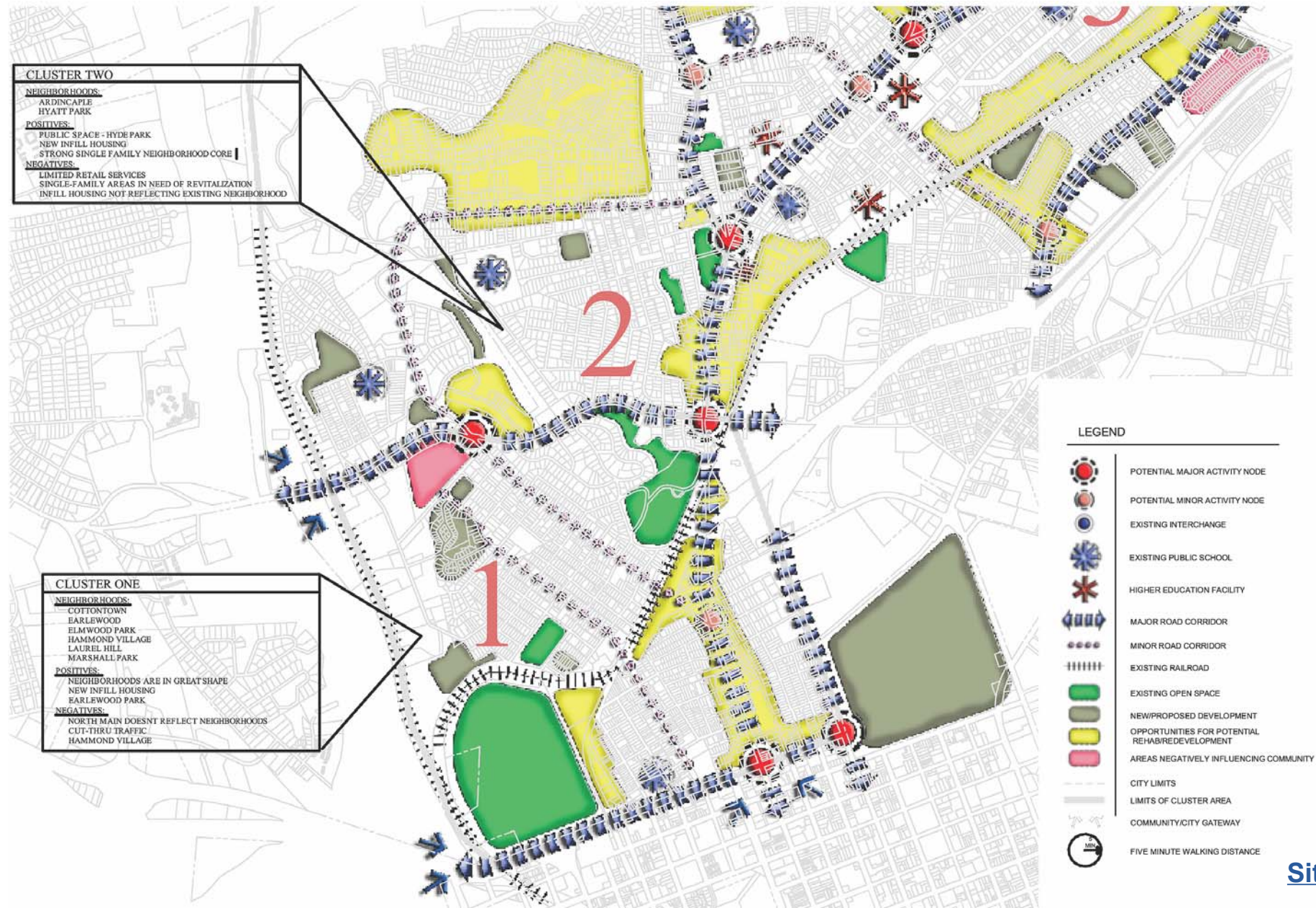
The master plan identified the future vision for the preservation of existing resources and redevelopment opportunities within the project area. The foundation for this master plan was developed during the public involvement sessions.

### *Catalysts*

Catalyst projects are redevelopment projects that provide an economic stimulus and development generator to the community. The majority of catalyst projects were identified during the public involvement sessions and then refined into conceptual development projects.

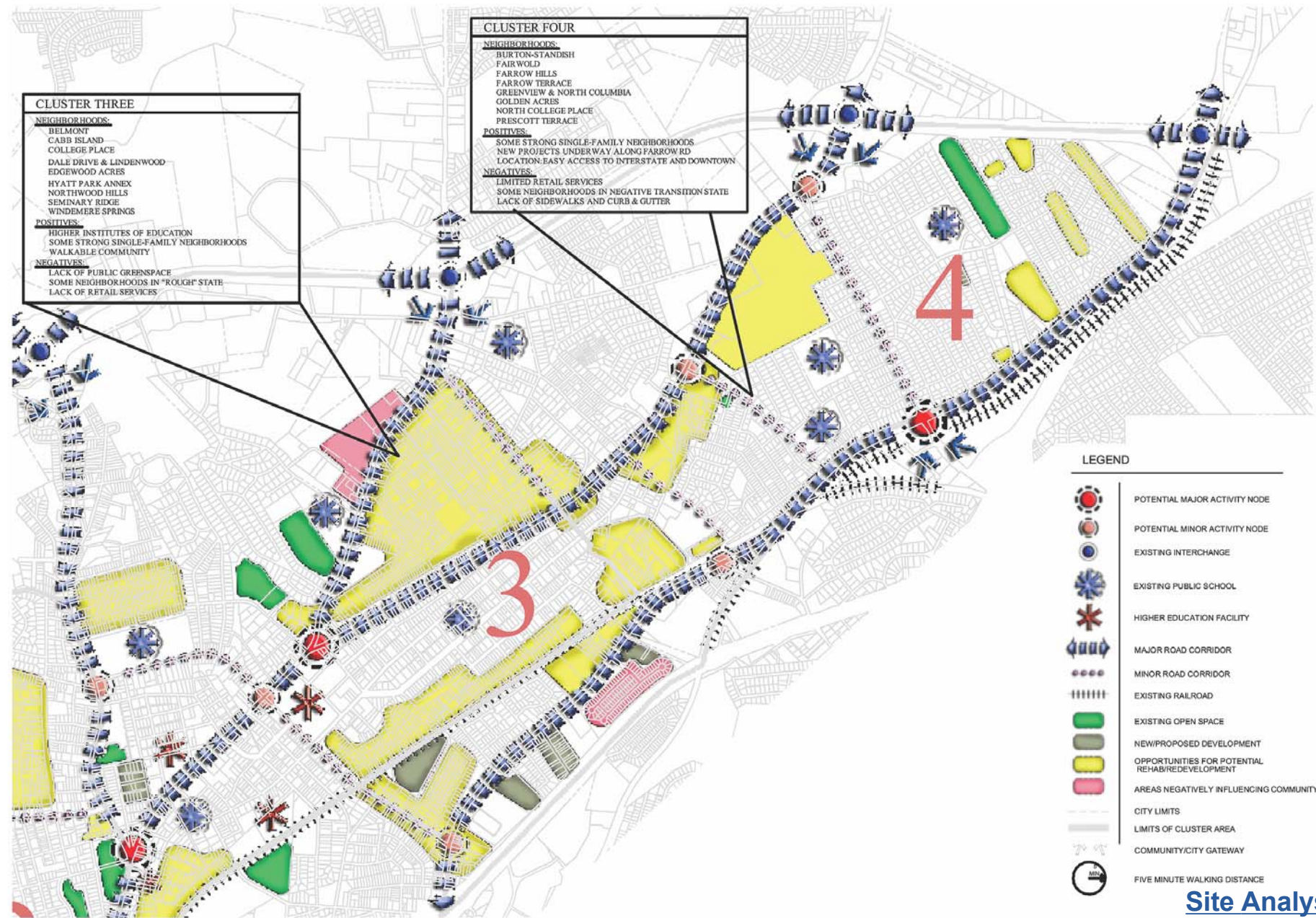
### *Action Plan*

The action plan identifies community issues and objectives, financing opportunities and a development timeline in order to achieve the vision developed by the North Columbia Coordinating Committee and “Take-Part” Workshop participants.



Site Analysis







Single-family homes in the Cottontown neighborhood



Farrow Road corridor

## Community Analysis

The community analysis identified the existing conditions within the community. These conditions included existing land use patterns, existing transportation circulation, topography, and historic resources as well as existing and future market trends within the community. The most important element of the community analysis was the “Take-Part” Workshops. These workshops allowed the community to develop one voice in directing the future of their community. It allowed the development team to interact, engage in conversation and elicit feedback about what the direction of the community should be.

North Columbia is a diverse community. It is best characterized by its beautiful, well established single-family neighborhoods, higher educational institutions, and vacant or neglected retail street corridors. The neighborhoods vary greatly in architectural style and size. Each neighborhood is unique. Some neighborhoods are historic developments of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The neighborhoods close proximity to downtown and their period architecture has resulted in an increase in home values and the attraction of residents with higher education levels. These neighborhoods have spurred new infill housing. Some neighborhoods near Interstate 20 are more traditional suburban developments of the 1950's to 1970's. These neighborhoods are characterized with large brick homes on large wooded lots. While many of these neighborhoods have remained well maintained and economically viable, some are beginning to show strains associated with many older suburban communities. Several neighborhoods are suffering from areas of blight. This can be associated with smaller homes that lack significant reinvestment opportunities, lack of code enforcement and minimal capital improvements. Efforts currently under way in many of these blighted neighborhoods include single family construction coordinated by the city sponsored Eau Claire Development Corporation (ECDC). The ECDC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and redevelopment of the North Columbia area. Established in 1993, the ECDC focuses on improving residential, commercial and cultural elements within the community.

The neighborhoods of North Columbia are bisected by traditional commercial street corridors. As identified by the North Columbia Coordinating Committee and public workshop participants, the majority of the area is absent of quality retail developments. These corridors, in particular N. Main Street, that run north from the Central Business District (CBD) to the Interstate 20, were developed based on the dominance of the automobile. Buildings are separated from the street by large, tree-less parking lots. As new suburbs were developed north of the area, many of the existing commercial establish-





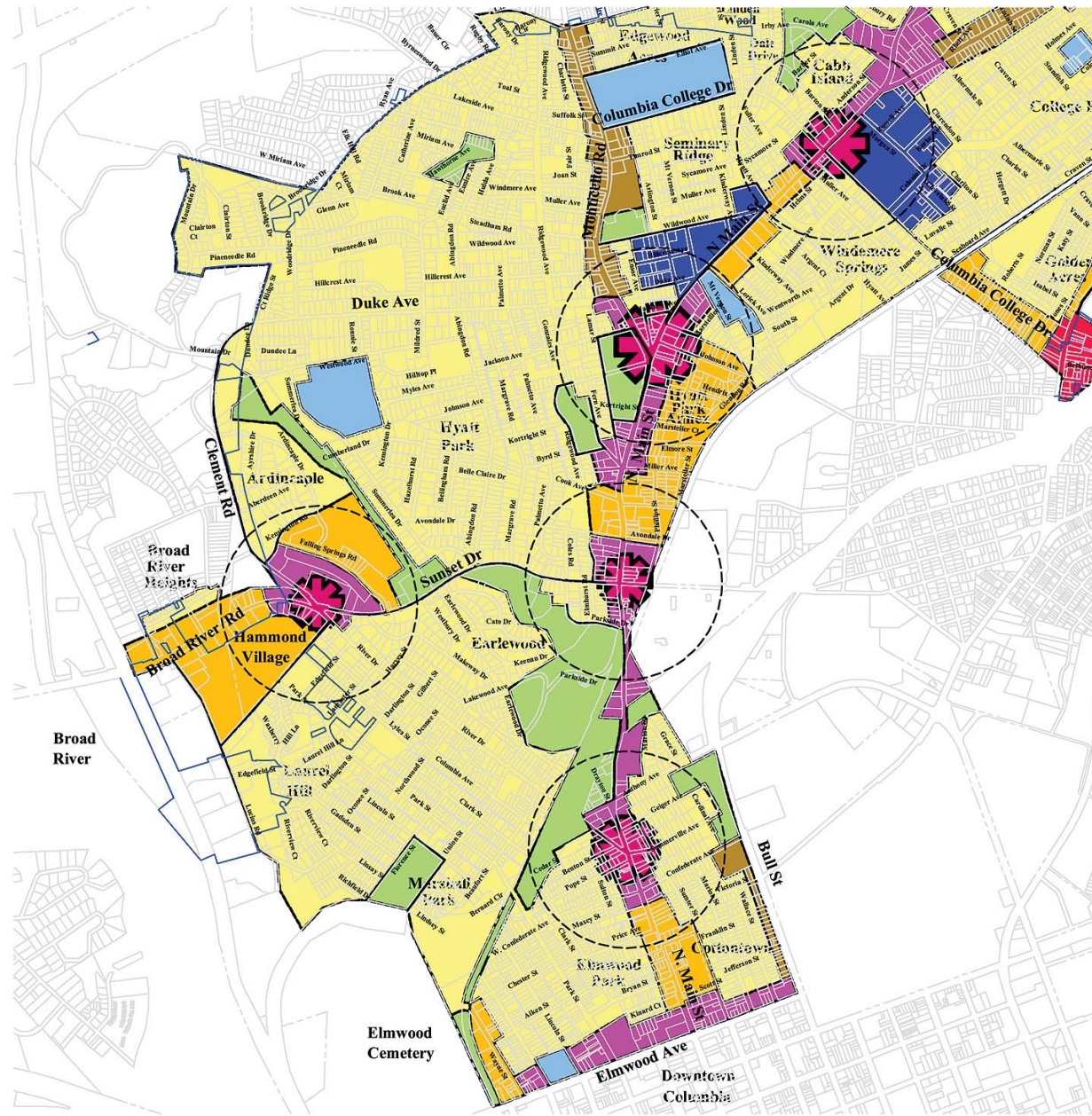
N. Main Street provides a non-pedestrian friendly environment



“Take-Part” workshop participants

ments departed because they sought newer, larger facilities. Many of the former automobile stores and strip centers are now occupied by lower tier tenants or are vacant. Existing multi-family buildings are dated, not well maintained and poorly located. Most importantly, none of these corridors are pedestrian friendly. It is difficult, uncomfortable and dangerous for residents to walk along these corridors. New developments along N. Main Street show promise for the future of these streets. The future implementation of the long anticipated N. Main Street streetscape project, from Elmwood Avenue north to Fairfield Road will create a pedestrian friendly streetscape as well as reinforce the City’s commitment to change within the area.

The public involvement component of the community analysis included public design workshops, a visual preference survey (VPS) and community open house. The “Take Part” Workshops were conducted in June of 2005. They included a morning visual preference survey and a table design session in the afternoon. The foundation for the North Columbia Master Plan was established at these workshops. The results of this workshop were documented and presented to the North Columbia Coordinating Committee and City Staff in August 2005. In September 2005, the development team presented the findings of the workshop and identified catalyst development projects to the residents to elicit feedback. The results of the open house identified the preferred development projects within the community. These projects were identified as first tier catalyst projects.



## LEGEND:

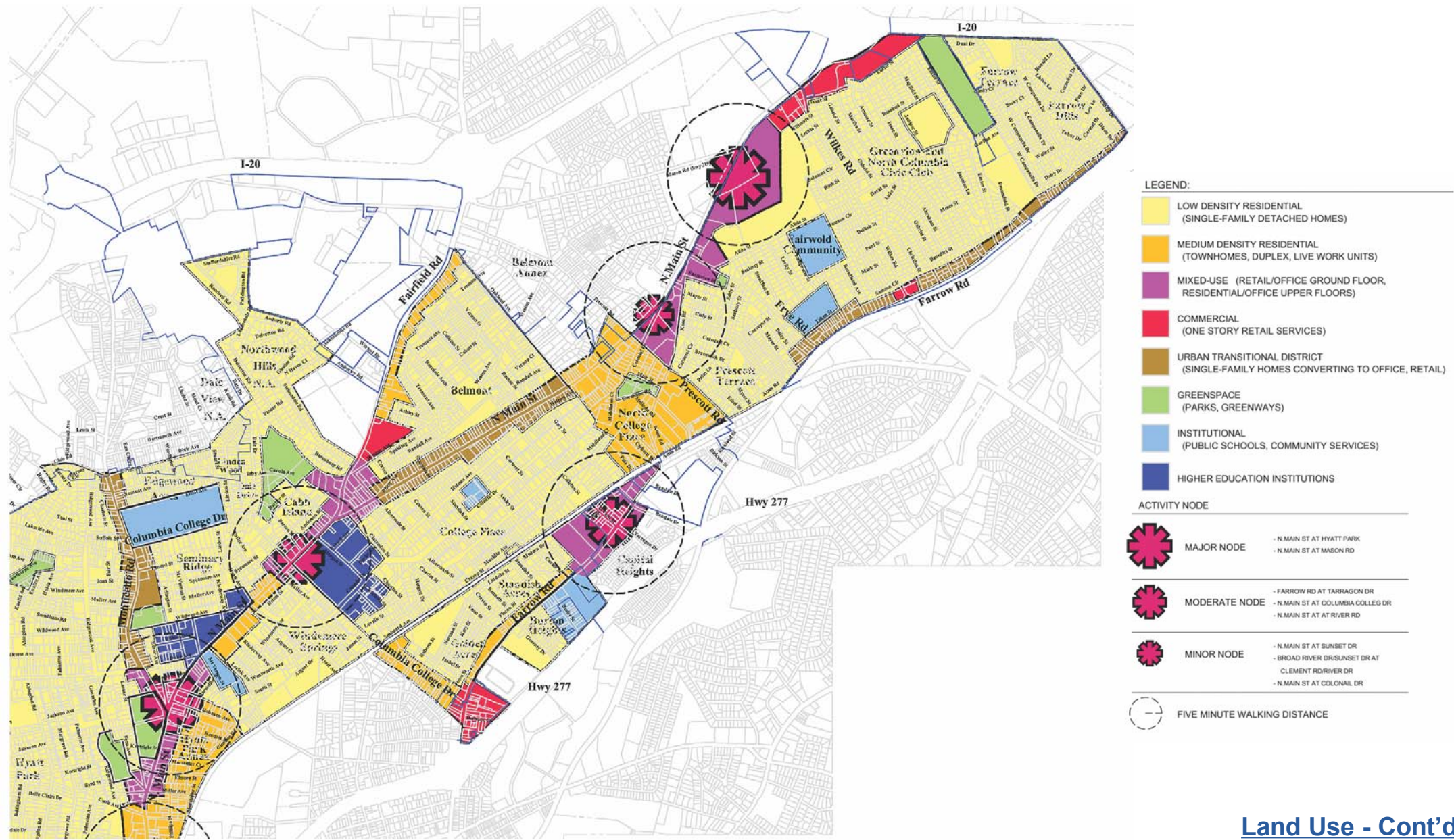
- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL  
(SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOMES)
- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL  
(TOWNHOMES, DUPLEX, LIVE WORK UNITS)
- MIXED-USE (RETAIL/OFFICE GROUND FLOOR,  
RESIDENTIAL/OFFICE UPPER FLOORS)
- COMMERCIAL  
(ONE STORY RETAIL SERVICES)
- URBAN TRANSITIONAL DISTRICT  
(SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES CONVERTING TO OFFICE, RETAIL)
- GREENSPACE  
(PARKS, GREENWAYS)
- INSTITUTIONAL  
(PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY SERVICES)
- HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## ACTIVITY NODE

- MAJOR NODE
  - N. MAIN ST AT HYATT PARK
  - N. MAIN ST AT MASON RD
- MODERATE NODE
  - FARROW RD AT TARRAGON DR
  - N. MAIN ST AT COLUMBIA COLLEGE DR
  - N. MAIN ST AT RIVER RD
- MINOR NODE
  - N. MAIN ST AT SUNSET DR
  - BROAD RIVER DR/SUNSET DR AT CLEMENT RD/RIVER DR
  - N. MAIN ST AT COLONIAL DR
- FIVE MINUTE WALKING DISTANCE

## Land Use





Land Use - Cont'd



Pedestrian friendly activity node



Townhome development along  
major road corridors

## Master Plan

The master plan was developed from the findings of the community analysis. Due to the size of the study area, one single recommendation or concept would not be applicable to all the areas. The North Columbia Master Plan identified three villages within the project area. These villages were identified based on location and similarities of adjacent neighborhoods. Each village identified activity nodes for retail, residential and cultural interaction, redefined transportation corridors into higher density residential or transitioning retail districts and identified improvement recommendations for each neighborhood.

### Artist Village

The Artist Village centered on the development of a moderate activity node at the intersection of N. Main Street and River Drive. This node or district would be a pedestrian friendly center. New construction would provide retail and gallery spaces of the ground floor with residential lofts or office space above. A center piece to the artist village would be the development of the former Hwy 277 right-of-way into a greenway that connects Earlewood Park to the north, Finlay Park to the south and the future Bull Street redevelopment to the east.

### College Village

The center of the College Village is the educational institutions of Columbia College, Lutheran Seminary and South University. While these institutes of learning attract new students and staff each year to the area, there are no retail services within the area that capture this market. The College Village would develop a major activity node that would capitalize on the untapped student market by creating a pedestrian friendly mixed-use atmosphere with retail and residential uses. This activity node would be developed in and around Hyatt Park at N. Main Street. An additional moderate activity node would be concentrated at N. Main Street and Columbia College Drive.





Develop pedestrian friendly neighborhood retail services



Trash in Belmont Neighborhood

### *Gateway Village*

The Gateway Village is the front door to North Columbia and the City of Columbia. Currently these gateways are nearly vacant and lifeless commercial street corridors that do not present a welcoming view of the City. They also fail to provide the adjacent neighborhoods with quality retail opportunities. To create a “destination” for the surrounding neighborhoods, the Gateway Village activity node would be developed along N. Main Street between Prescott Drive and Mason Road. This higher density node would include residential and commercial components that together create a vibrant, pedestrian friendly space.

### *Redevelopment Areas*

Five neighborhoods were identified for being designated Redevelopment Areas. These neighborhoods exhibit significant areas of blight. Blight is defined as a combination of five of the following factors: age; dilapidation; obsolescence; deterioration; illegal use of individual structures; excessive vacancies; destructive land use or layout; and others. These neighborhoods exhibited many of these traits including vacant or deteriorating buildings, boarded up homes; substandard housing that does not foster significant reinvestment and lack of capital improvements. Redevelopment Area designation enables the municipal authorities the necessary powers to foster redevelopment. Neighborhoods identified as Redevelopment Areas are:

- ◆ Golden Acres Neighborhood
- ◆ Hyatt Park Annex Neighborhood
- ◆ Edgewood Acres
- ◆ North College Place Neighborhood
- ◆ Belmont Neighborhood



## Catalysts

**Catalyst 1-2 (N. Main Street at River Drive)**

The N. Main Street at River Drive catalyst is the activity center for the Artist Village. Located on twelve parcels on approximately eight acres within the Cottontown and Elmwood Park neighborhoods, this catalyst project would create a dynamic pedestrian friendly activity center that would include retail and residential elements. The redevelopment of the existing multi-family apartments into owner occupied townhomes would add a higher density residential element that would benefit from its close proximity to the greenway and add a residential density to support the proposed retail uses.

The retail elements would be located adjacent to N. Main Street and would include small boutiques, art galleries and a local restaurant or coffee shop to attract foot traffic to the area from the park and surrounding neighborhoods. Residential lofts or office space on the upper floors would again increase the residential density needed to support the commercial uses.





## ***Catalyst 2-7 (Broad River Road)***

The Broad River Road catalyst would redevelop existing industrial uses and vacant neglected parcels into a higher density residential development. Located on nine acres within the Broad River Heights neighborhood, this catalyst would be a joint City of Columbia and Richland County project. The higher density owner occupied townhomes would attract young professionals and empty nesters with its close proximity to both downtown Columbia and Interstate 20. Pedestrian access to The Three Rivers Greenway is within a ten minute walking distance.

New single-family homes along Hart Street would buffer the townhomes from the existing single-family neighborhood. Along with the proposed redevelopment of Roosevelt Village to the north, the Broad River Road catalyst would positively impact the Broad River Height neighborhood.



## *Catalyst 3-2 (N. Main Street at Colleton Street)*

The redevelopment of the existing multi-family housing along N. Main Street at Colleton Street into owner occupied townhomes would eliminate a current eyesore from the community as well as provide alternative housing. The catalyst site is located on two acres.

The area has been identified as an Urban Transitional District. This district preserves the existing single-family character of this portion of N. Main Street but allows for the land use to change from residential to commercial. The townhomes would reinforce the residential feel of the street. In addition, the catalyst would reconnect the existing pedestrian experience along the portion of N. Main Street.



## ***Catalyst 3-5 (N. Main Street at Columbia College Drive)***

Located adjacent to Columbia College, the N. Main Street at Columbia College Drive catalyst would be developed as a mixed-use node that targets the existing student population as well as the surrounding neighborhoods of College Place, Cabb Island and Windemere Springs. This development, on two of the four corners of the intersection, along with the existing CVS pharmacy would create a “College Corner” that would attract students to walk from campus for goods and services.

Retail shops would be located on the ground floor with office or residential space above. This node would not only supply the neighborhoods with a central gathering place but it would also serve as an effective gateway and an additional recruiting tool for the college.



# Executive Summary

**Catalyst 4-5 (N. Main Street at Prescott Road)**

The N. Main Street at Prescott Road catalyst is located within the Gateway Village of North Columbia. The catalyst, located on approximately 15 acres, would redevelop an existing “strip” shopping center and adjacent vacant parcels into a higher density residential and retail development. New retail spaces would be developed along N. Main Street adjacent to the existing Eckerd Pharmacy.

New higher density, owner-occupied townhomes would provide higher density necessary to support the proposed retail and also provide additional housing within the community. To buffer the new development from the existing Fairwold neighborhood, single-family homes would be built along Koon Road.





## Action Plan

The City of Columbia cannot implement this plan by itself. The development of North Columbia must involve partnerships between public agencies, private developers and neighborhood organizations. By identifying and pulling resources together, the vision identified by the workshop participants can be delivered more efficiently.

### ***Community Goal: Reinvent the Image of North Columbia***

- ◆ Establish community branding identification (North Columbia Coordinating Committee)
- ◆ Implement a marketing campaign to combat the negative perception of being a high crime area
- ◆ Improve community markers and develop Gateway monuments
- ◆ Create volunteer clean-up brigades for each district (Neighborhood Clean-up Initiatives)

### ***Community Goal: Preservation of existing single-family neighborhoods***

- ◆ Code Enforcement
- ◆ Regulatory Enhancements
- ◆ Rehabilitation of existing homes
- ◆ Infill Development
- ◆ Infrastructure Investment

### ***Community Goal: Develop mixed-use activity nodes***

- ◆ Develop primary road corridor design overlays
- ◆ Identify potential users and operators
- ◆ Identify potential partnerships
- ◆ Provide incentives for greyfield/brownfield redevelopment
- ◆ Coordinate Streetscape and Utilities improvement

***Community Goal: Maintain and develop new parks and community open spaces***

- ♦ Identify issues/needs within existing parks
- ♦ Acquire areas for new parks as identified by the Master Plan
- ♦ Identify funding sources

***Community Goal: Increase educational services and outreach programs***

- ♦ Inform and improve social programs within the community
- ♦ Identify potential partnerships with education facilities
- ♦ Increase police presence within the community
- ♦ Identify cultural programs and groups for community